

# **MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

## **JUNE 18, 2007**

### **MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria**

**PRESENT:** Doug Sweet (Acting Chair), Jane Brown, Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Linda Hiller, Rosemary Larking, Girard Plante, Heather Platt, Jason Rosenberg,  
**REGRETS:** Rob Caruso, Herb Cole, Jeff Hutter, Barbara Lischinsky, Janna Zwerner  
**STAFF:** Beverly Droz, Lowell Haynes

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 pm and was chaired by Douglas Sweet, Acting Chairperson.

#### **Minutes of 5/21/07 were accepted.**

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

##### **Café St. Petersburg (53-57 Union Street):**

Jason had spoken with the consultant to the restaurant. He also made a statement to the Architectural Access Board that while the MCPD wants the building to be accessible, we don't want to put the restaurant out of business. Tom Hopkins told Jason that irrespective of our statement, the AAB has been dealing with the landlord and the tenant for a long time. The landlord should have agreed to the common space but he wouldn't. His contract is written so as to have the lease owner responsible. The AAB stated that the place needs to be accessible, so it falls on the tenant. It is not fair but it happens. It is frustrating for our committee, the AAAB and the business. Jason gave some history on the same landlord's reluctance to deal with an accessible entrance at 93 Union St in the past.

Lowell pointed out that Rosemary couldn't get through the door of the café with her wheelchair and that was the source of involvement for the MCPD.

##### **Blocked egress:**

Copies of Doug's letters to Veteran's Taxi, the Police and the Fire Chiefs were handed out. Bev read Veteran's reply. Lucie reported that she hadn't seen taxis parked in the curb cut/crosswalk areas recently. It was discussed that if there continued to be infractions we may want to meet with the Fire and Police Chiefs to discuss the issues with them. We have no enforcement, but it is good policy to be sure that the Police and this Committee have the same intent.

Jason suggested that we may want to draw up the six most common infraction locations, such as newspaper boxes that demonstrate blocked egress, and if we do meet with those departments, we could share the list as priority locations of which they could be aware.

##### **Citizen's Bank on Centre St.**

A while back Lowell visited the assistant manager who said they'd watch the low accessible booth. Lowell reported that their door is difficult to open. Lowell mentioned Bank of America at 303 Walnut Street in Newtonville as exemplary; their pull weight is only 5 lbs. Rosemary stated Citizen's Bank has also taken away the lower tables with banking slips. Doug will follow up.

##### **Snow Removal:**

Lucie sent an email with a link to the Aldermen's agenda but the snow removal reference was vague. It referenced: Alderman Ken Parker and Scott Lennon requesting an ordinance to improve enforcement related to snow removal (#522-03); and Alderman Samuelson requesting an ordinance amendment to require all property owners or residents to remove snow from sidewalks abutting their property (#35-04). Jason will call Scott and Christine to learn more.

## **CDBG ACCESS PROJECTS REPORT for June by Lowell**

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Any discussion that took place at the meeting, other than Lowell's reading of the report, is noted below each appropriate bullet item and will start with the words "It was noted".

- Police Headquarters Annex Access Ramp (Project CD0203A. Expended, \$251,693; Budget balance, \$1,157; Building Dept. budget, \$66,600) – The concrete ramp is complete and handrails have now been completed. *The project is ready for a final inspection.*
- Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$25,015; Budget balance: \$14,386) – In keeping with the vote of the Committee, we have ordered the installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot Streets, Beacon and Chestnut Streets, and Adams and Watertown Streets. I estimate hardware costs for each of these three intersections at \$1,400. We have also ordered Polara Navigator signals at Washington Street and Commonwealth Avenue. I estimate hardware costs for this intersection at \$9,000. We are attempting to communicate with the Traffic Engineer to improve the pedestrian crossing at Centre Street @ Centre Ave. Our hope is to have independent crossing signals for the two streets and straighten the crosswalk across Centre Street. We've requested regular APS-10 pedestrian signals, but this intersection would be an excellent location for the Polara Navigator signals because of ambient sound control and beaconing capabilities. I estimate the hardware cost for this intersection between \$1,400 and \$3,000. *I have received a communication that indicates the City may not be able to pay for installation costs in the coming year. I am investigating. (Expected Date of Completion: summer 2008.)*

*It was noted that Lowell sent an email to Commissioner Rooney and he has responded that he is in favor of somehow finding the funds and will work with Clint Schuckel to make it happen. There was discussion about the buttons, hardware and installation. (APS cost \$350, installation can be \$100) and adapters. Lowell will ask for more information*

- Wellington Park Access (Project CD0303C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$10,000) – No change. Our project is an asphalt walkway to provide an accessible route from the park entrance to some benches and to the basketball and tennis courts. DPW will do the work. The work has been delayed because of disagreement among residents regarding the location of additional walkways through the park that are to be funded by the City's CPA budget. *(EDC: October 2007)*
- Ware's Cove Accessible Connector Path (Project CD0403A. Expended, \$8,562; Budget balance, \$10,178) – Construction is near completion on the accessible path that begins at the field house, passes east of the children's play area, and connects with the accessible path that begins north of the playground and runs to the pump house on the way to Purgatory Cove. *A few locations in the path need additional compacted stone dust and these are scheduled to be done in the next few weeks. (EDC: July 2007)*
- Benches (Project CD0403C. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$3,000) – No change. The current budget will be limited to installation of benches at Wellington Park when our construction of walkways in the park is completed. *(EDC: October 2007)*
- Curb Cuts (Projects CD0703D and CD0803G. Expended, \$37,482; Budget balance: \$156,747) – The Dept. of Public Works will hire a dedicated crew in by the beginning of August for CDBG projects, primarily curb cuts. We have submitted specific requests for 63 curb cuts. Many of the locations are on Woodland Road from Hancock Street to Windermere Road. We are still expanding our list of curb cuts to be done in 2007. Mayor's Committee members are still encouraged to report priority locations for needed curb cuts. *(Expected Date of Completion: None. On-going work.)*

*It was noted that Lowell reported that they are hiring a new crew starting July 1, but they won't be on site until mid August because it takes time to bring them on board. That is frustrating because many of these cuts won't be done until after school starts.*

- Public Facilities and Parks Access (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$0; Budget balance, \$67,293) – The first project under this budget is the *construction of the accessible walkway from the Mason-Rice School parking lot to the planned accessible play area within the Newton Centre Playground*. The project will be managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation and carried out by the Department of Public Works. Work should begin in July. The second part of this project is the *re-construction of two sets of stairs in Burr Park* by the Department of Public Works and the installation of railings on all three sets of stairs in the park. The reconstruction of the stairs is underway and should be completed by early July. *In response to our request for project applications from City departments, the Department of Parks and Recreation has announced that upgrading of the Newton Highlands Playground and Upper Falls Playground is being planned and they will request funds for accessibility improvements. (EDC: October 2007)*

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### **Waban Library:**

Lowell handed out a diagram of the Waban Library's entrance. He had emailed everyone with his report to Kath Glick-Weil following his visit there. The walkway is only 39-40 inches wide and there is a drop-off next to the walkway of up to 4 ft. Railings are needed. The entrance door needs hardware replacement and the stair riser is not the same height. Lowell described the layout of the bathroom and said it is not doable at this time. Lowell has given Kathy the application for project funding and he will follow up with her.

### **Playgrounds:**

Lowell handed out 2 Executive Summary packets being presented at tonight's Park Commission meeting.

1) Newton Highlands Playground Master Plan.

2) Newton Upper Falls Playground Master Plan.

They're not asking for any funds from us yet. Lowell wanted the Committee to be aware of it. He mentioned there are many opportunities for accessible paths, benches, etc. Currently no paths are accessible. Parks and Recreation's intent is to do renovations in an accessible manner. For Newton Upper Falls Site, after the baseball field, a path toward the river with a switch back path would be expensive but ideal. If they are building a fishing pier, they'd need to make it accessible.

### **Nail Salon in West Newton:**

Rosemary reported that the Nail Salon two doors down from Shing Yee Restaurant put in a new threshold that is several inches higher than the old one. She can no longer get over it with her wheelchair. Jason suggested that we send a letter to them asking them to fix it within 30 days. Rosemary will get the contact information and Doug will write the letter.

### **Preparation for Lowell's retirement:**

Jason, Doug and Lowell met with his boss, Amy Yuhasz to discuss Lowell's retirement and who will fill his role. Lowell has been acting as the ADA/AAB advisor and has worked way beyond his hours over the years to monitor projects and to be an advocate for the committee. Lowell's position involves oversight of the CDBG accessible projects as well.

Jason is meeting with John Lojek (Inspectional Services) tomorrow. Lojek was expecting to fill a position that would include more formal plan review about access issues, but it was not funded. Jason also has a call into Tom Hopkins at AAB. There are so many formal projects that go back years. How can they be catalogued to be of use to an incoming person? We discussed if MCPD members can try to fill some of this job but that is not feasible. The next meeting to discuss the issue of Lowell's departure will also include Mike Kruse, John Lojek and Bev Droz.

**Motion to adjourn at 8:27 pm.      The next meeting will be July16 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.**